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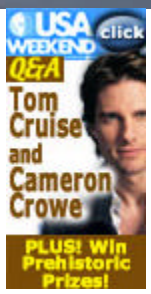

Sunday, December 9, 2001

E-mail This Article

N.H. to help fund study on Montreal train

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts officials will study whether to start high-speed rail service between Boston and Montreal.

The first phase of the three-year study will look at potential ridership and the time needed to restore the northern New England service. The second phase will review engineering and design, Vermont Trans-portation Agency officials said Friday.

"This certainly is not a project that's going to happen in a year or two," said Karen Songhurst of the transportation agency. "It's a long-term investment."

Vermont was designated part of a high-speed rail corridor by the federal government last year for a proposed route that would run from Boston to Montreal.

The "high-speed" trains would run up to an average of 90 mph. The increased speed and service to Montreal would help draw more riders, Songhurst said. The new train would run through New Hampshire in Nashua, Concord and Manchester. From White River Junction, it would follow the existing rail corridor along Interstate 89 to St. Albans and Alburg, where it would connect with the Canadian National Railway.

"If you take the whole corridor, there would need to be significant upgrades (to the tracks)," Songhurst said. "And in one section, from Concord to White River, there's no track."

The $400,000 study will be funded by a $200,000 grant from the Federal Railroad Administration and equal amounts of matching funds from the three states.

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